

"There are many little ways to
enlarge a child's world. Love of
books is the best of all"



EDITORIAL

Schooling in Cambodia is generally characterized by a very authoritarian teaching style. As a result students do not dare to raise any questions or ask the teachers to repeat what they have not understood. The children are also not used to actively engage in class.

Although this teaching style has often been criticized, it continues to be the standard. It may be adequate for conveying certain information, introducing new topics or explaining complex ideas. However, it does not allow students to memorize the content in the long run. Just a small proportion is remembered.

In Cambodia this leads to more privileged children taking private lessons in the afternoon where the lesson of the morning is repeated. Unfortunately the underprivileged children are deprived of this option since the additional classes have to be paid for.

Another problem is that the authoritarian teaching style does not foster any autonomous or critical thinking. Such thinking, however, is crucial if the students are to become mature and responsible citizens who pro-actively engage in the future of their country.

For these reasons it is our great ambition to promote trust, self-confidence, courage, imagination, creativity, responsibility and individuality. This year we have made a vital step into the right direction by training teachers, conducting workshops for students and organizing a variety of activities in the library.



Andrea Paulich

Gründerin von Seed of Small Beginnings



Bild: Kaneka, die beste Leserin der Primarschule in Bech Khlok

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The following annual report describes the activities of *Seed of Small Beginnings* between the 1st of January and the 31st of December 2016.



OBJECTIVES

The goal of *Seed of Small Beginnings* is to achieve a lasting improvement of the living standards of suffering children and their families in Cambodia, and to make a meaningful and lasting contribution to the reduction of poverty and misery in the World. In particular we aim to improve education, hygiene and health care.

Seed of Small Beginnings is working closely with local communities in order to ensure the sustainability of the projects. We prioritise projects which have been initiated by local residents.

PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

In 2016, *Seed of Small Beginnings* has focused its activities on two school projects:

- Countryside Class in Battambang
- Primary school in Bech Khlok

At the Countryside Class (in the regional capital Battambang), our activities were not only dedicated to the ongoing enhancement of teaching quality but also to organizing events on more general topics like protecting the environment. In rural Bech Khlok we focused on the construction of a new school building. This marks a great success for such a small and young non-profit organization.

Specifically, the following projects were conducted by *Seed of New Beginnings* in 2016:



COUNTRYSIDE CLASS

The Countryside Class located in a suburb of Battambang was founded by a local tuktuk driver. Today the school offers free classes in English, traditional dance, and arts to over 80 children.

Since *Seed of Small Beginnings* established a school library last year, two of the older students have been trained as librarians to keep the library open throughout the day and to the whole community. With its selection of books in English and Khmer, catering for all age groups, it is not only designed to encourage the students' interest in reading and learning but also to provide access to education for adults. Thanks to its range of board games and handicraft materials, the library has also become a social meeting point for the children from the neighborhood. They gather to listen to stories, play with each other, do homework, craft and much more.

In 2016, *Seed of Small Beginnings* was not only able to provide financial support for the Countryside Class with its two local teachers and one support teacher but also for a German volunteer fully qualified in

comparative education. She stayed for several months and enhanced the quality of the daily English and weekly dance classes significantly by introducing new pedagogic methods.

Furthermore, the students have learned about the environmental problems resulting from single-use plastic products by help of the "Plastic Free Cambodia" initiative. They organized lectures and activities around recycling, composting, waste disposal and resource management to raise the students' awareness for these important topics. A change in attitude has already occurred: since 2016 the school is plastic-free!

What's more, for a period of two weeks the students had the opportunity to develop their personalities in a workshop called "Free to be me!". Two volunteers, one of them a professional actress, used methods of experiential education to coach the children in team spirit, coordination, trust, self-confidence, courage, imagination, creativity, responsibility, concentration and individuality.

PRIMARY SCHOOL BECH KHLOK

The people of Bech Khlok, a small settlement in Western Cambodia, still do not have any access to clean water or electricity, as well as no medical aid during the rainy season (4-5 months per year). Despite the efforts of the locals, the existing primary school was in poor condition.

This is why we first provided a basic range of educational materials. After a provisional upgrade of the existing infrastructure we started with the urgently needed construction of a new school building. In addition, we have provided the school with water tanks, bio-sand water filters and two toilets to improve the precarious hygienic situation. The water filters serve as a reserve water supply source, in case the rainwater stocks run out during the dry season.

Some of the children show signs of impairment in their physical and mental development due to sicknesses resulting from contaminated water and a general lack of hygiene. Along with the set-up of the sand filters and toilets, *Seed of New Beginnings* has provided education about safe drinking water

and hygiene in form of a photo story book that the students and teachers of the village have self-produced.

Seed of Small Beginnings was able to partner with the Cambodian non-profit organization KAPE for the urgently needed improvement of the teaching quality in Bech Khlok and purchased learning material for playful and active learning. In cooperation with KAPE, the two teachers received training on how to best use these materials. After the positive experiences at the Countryside Class, the primary school in Bech Khlok was provided with a small library in a box with some children's books to promote the joy of reading. In addition, we offered several board games to celebrate the opening of the new classrooms. *Seed of Small Beginnings* also initiated pen pal tandems between the older students of Bech Khlok and students of Terra Nova, a private school in Switzerland. This allows the children of these contrasting worlds to mutually learn from each other about their very different lifestyles.



PUBLIC RELATIONS AND REGISTRATION OF THE SWISS NON-PROFIT ASSOCIATION

For an organisation which is mainly financed through private donations, a public appearance in traditional and social media is essential. In this area too, *Seed of Small Beginnings* can look back on a successful year 2016:

- Website, Blog and Newsletter

In addition to our regular social media updates those who signed up were informed about the projects by a monthly newsletter.

- Social Media

Seed of Small Beginnings is present in social media such as Facebook, Instagram and Vimeo.

In 2016 *Seed of Small Beginnings* issued an annual report for the first time.

The German newspaper Darmstädter Echo also published an article about *Seeds'* activities and *Seed of New Beginnings* was registered as a non-profit association in Switzerland. This last step not only helps us to become better known and be in closer touch with our donors, but also to raise new donations for our projects.





WORK WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Although *Seed of Small Beginnings*, founded in 2014, is a fairly new non-profit organization, we were able to already establish contact with multiple other charities. Some of these partnerships have already resulted in new, partly shared, projects:

- **Plastic Free Cambodia**

This Australian educational start-up aims to minimize the use of single-use plastic items in Cambodia. In the context of the campaign Plastic Free July, we held joint workshops with Plastic Free Cambodia at the Countryside Class.

- **KAPE – Kampuchean Action for Primary Education**

The goal of this Cambodian initiative is to improve primary school education in Cambodia. We acquired teaching materials from KAPE for the school in Bech Khlok. We also organized training sessions for the teachers run by KAPE on how to use these materials. These innovative teaching methods promote learning as an active process.

- **Caring for Cambodia**

This American not-profit organization focuses on the sustainable improvement of education quality by providing school equipment, mentoring and training teachers. We have organized a workshop for the teachers of the countryside class to learn about general teaching methods for classes of different ages, as well as a two-day training course for the librarians on how to create an exciting library.

Beyond these co-operations we were able to get funding from the Swiss Batulong foundation for our most important project in 2016: the construction of a new school building in Bech Khlok. Thanks to Batulong's generous donation, we have been able to considerably improve the conditions for running a school successfully in this particularly impoverished area of Cambodia.

Seed of New Beginnings benefits from the close cooperation with other non-profit organisations to make best use of deployed resources and optimize the sustainability of our projects.

We particularly would like to thank the many people who have helped us to realize a lot of our projects with their smaller or larger donations. The project support of other non-profit organisations, in particular the generous donation of Batulong foundation, was crucial for the succeeding of many projects in 2016.

Last but not least, *Seed of New Beginnings* also relies on immaterial support. Without all those self-less volunteers, from local supporters and international volunteers to people who raise funds or distribute information in their free time, our projects would not exist. This year we have been particularly lucky to benefit from the commitment of highly qualified volunteers, with some of them even staying for several months to engage with our cause.

ÅKHUN, MERCI, THANKS, DANKE ...

THANK YOU!



ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Balance January 2016

Balance 01.01.2016 9,156 USD

Revenue

Donations 36,140 USD

Total Revenue 2016 **36,140 USD**

Expenses

Countryside Class

Infrastructure improvements (electric installations) 125 USD

Workshop in Siem Reap for teachers and librarians 200 USD

Traditional dance group 45 USD

Salaries:

Samboun, 12x 40 plus 50 Bonus 530 USD

Seavyong, 12x 115 plus 115 Bonus 1,495 USD

Librarians, 6x 10 60 USD

Lease of land, 12x 100 1,200 USD

Stationary, printing costs, material for workshops 640 USD

Books, games and DVD's 114 USD

Total Countryside Class **4,409 USD**

Bech Khlok

Total construction costs 2-classroom unit 10,957 USD

Water for school (during dry season) 30 USD

Workshop und teaching materials from KAPE 229 USD

Books for library 54 USD

Schoolbags from AVEC 70 USD

Stationary and printing costs 130 USD

Trips to Bech Khlok in March and April 256 USD

Monthly supplementary payment for 2 teachers, 12x 100 1,200 USD

Total Bech Khlok **12,926 USD**

Travel Costs

Visa 125 USD

Rent motorbike March and April 150 USD

Miscellaneous

Fees Performance Report NZ 39 USD

Fees Visa Debit Cards NZ Bank account 14 USD

Total Expenses 2016 **17,663 USD**

OUTLOOK

After the school construction project in Bech Khlok was successfully completed, we received news that Swiss foundation Batulong will grant us another very generous donation. This will enable us to add another building to the school in 2017, including a third classroom, a dormitory for external teachers and a library. In parallel, various activities are planned to improve hygienic conditions, e.g. by distributing water filters to the families of Bech Khlok.

After we created a part-time job for managing the library of the countryside class in Battambang, our plans for next year are to hire a general local project manager. The position will be created to strengthen and upgrade present structures, foster projects and collaborations in Battambang and partly assume managerial tasks for *Seed of Small Beginnings*, including the coordination of our projects in Bech Khlok.



Front Elevation



Picture: Second construction stage primary school Bech Khlok



SWITZERLAND

Heidenmösliweg 3
CH-8713 Uerikon

WEBSITE

www.seedbeginnings.com

EMAIL

seed_beginning@hotmail.com